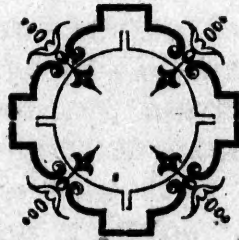


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WONDERS OF LOURDES.



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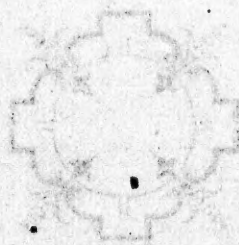
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THE
WONDERS OF LOURDES.

EX-VOTO.

ON the 17th of October, says Mgr. Ségur, it seemed that my mother was to be snatched from those who loved her, by a terrible attack which, in a few hours reduced her to the last extremity. A skillful physician candidly warned me of the danger, adding that certain alarming symptoms left him no hope. The distortion of her features, it appears, was frightful, and her pulse had almost ceased to beat.

After having received the last Sacraments with great faith and humility, the dying woman, who was perfectly conscious, remained in the same condition for several hours. "It will be to-night," she said to me, calmly, "it will be at sunset."

A pious friend of the family, who had come to bid her a last farewell, was inspired to have re-

course to Our Lady of Lourdes. This thought was joyfully received by all : by a providential coincidence, the last book which my mother and I had read together, towards the end of our vacation, was precisely Mr. Laserre's beautiful and touching book on the miracles of Lourdes.

In about two hours, our excellent friend brought us a small flask filled with water from the miraculous grotto ; we put some of it on the bandage of ice-water which had been placed on the patient's head, and I made a vow if the Blessed Virgin left us our mother, that I would go and celebrate in the very Sanctuary of Lourdes, a Mass of thanksgiving.

A few minutes after the water of Lourdes had touched my mother, she fell into a peaceful sleep, which lasted till the close of day. The sun went down, and she did not die. " Then, it will undoubtedly be to-morrow morning," said she to me again, " unless Our Lady of Lourdes.....These sort of attacks return almost always at sunrise or sunset."

Next morning, the sun rose and the day began without anything occurring. That evening, the next day, and the day following that, it was the same. The actual danger passed away from hour to hour, so much so that at the end of ten or twelve days, she began to be convalescent.

The doctor, who was a true Christian, watched with mingled joy and astonishment the progress of so unhopèd for a cure. without wishing to

present this cure as a miracle, I cannot help regarding it as a supernatural favor, and as a very great grace, due to Our Lady of Lourdes.

Full of gratitude, I have then fulfilled my vow. I have had the happiness of venerating that sacred grotto, still balmy with the fragrance of the Mother of God. And as I wished to leave at that blessed shrine, a little offering in token of my gratitude and love, I promised Our Lady of Lourdes to collect in a little popular work, within reach of all minds and of all purses, the wonders that the divine mercy has deigned to accomplish in that place.

It is this little work that I now place at the feet of the Blessed Virgin in the grotto of Lourdes, and which I here offer to your piety, my dear reader.

I.

THE FAVORED GROTTO OF LOURDES.

Lourdes is a pretty little Pyrenese town, in the diocese of Tarbes. Prior to the marvels which we are about to relate, Lourdes was little known except for its excellent chocolate.

At some distance from the town, towards the west arises an almost perpendicular wall of rocks, known in the neighborhood as the rocks

of *Massabielle*, which means old rocks. In this wall of gray stones, nature has hollowed a grotto about twelve feet in height and of equal depth. This grotto was the place designated by Providence for the manifestation of the glory and goodness of the Blessed Virgin.

No one ever came to this lonely spot, unless it were some shepherds, who, surprised by bad weather, sought shelter in the grotto. The earth in the cavern was, in fact, very dry.

II.

LITTLE BERNADETTE.

MARIE—Bernarde Soubirons, of Lourdes, to whom we will give her familiar name of BERNADETTE, was, in 1858, a little girl of fourteen, humble amongst the humbler of this world. Her family lived by work and saving, in a poverty, which was little short of misery.

Bernadette was born delicate ; but this frail child hid a treasure which God guarded ; this was her heart, her innocence. At fourteen, Bernadette had not yet made her First Communion. Yet her baptismal innocence remained intact in her soul. She had a horror of evil, and faults committed in her presence pained her. Her sister, three years younger, relates with tenderness and respect, that Bernadette often scolded her for not caring to pray, her abruptness and her rough ways.

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During the prayer which was said every evening in common and aloud, little Bernadette's posture was always very respectful; Notwithstanding her ignorance, the simple child prayed much. She loved prayer, although as yet she only knew the Rosary. The Virgin—Mother of Nazareth loved Bernadette, let her grow up humble and pious, and waited for her.

The priest who had charge of the parish of Bartres, at the time when Bernadette was to leave the village to prepare herself at home for her First Communion, met her one day, leading her flock. The child's air of innocence and candor went to his heart. He saluted her with a sort of respect; and going back to look at her again, he said to himself; "The children to whom the Blessed Virgin appeared on the mountain of La Salette, must have been like this little one."

The good priest never suspected that in these was a gleam of prophecy.

III.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH, 1858.

Thursday, February 11th, 1858, the woman Soubirons, allowed her daughter to accompany her little sister Marie and a little neighbour, who were going to look for dead wood on the banks of the Gave, besides the rocks of Massabielle.

The three children set out gaily about half-past eleven. Half an hour after, they were at work, on the common ground beside the stream, facing the grotto of which we have spoken. It was cold ; the weather was cloudy, but calm.

Bernadette was a little behind ; less fortunate than her two companions, she had not yet found any dead wood. They had just crossed the bed of the stream, then almost dry ; they had waded over with bare feet, and when putting on their little sabots,* they called to Bernadette that the water was very cold.

Weakened by her asthma, poor Bernadette hesitated to wet her feet. " I dare not go into the water," said she to them, " with such a cold as I have." She, however, decided to do so, and sitting on a large stone, she began to take off her shoes. A sudden noise, like an impetuous wind, caused her to raise her head and look round. It was strange ! the poplars which grew on the bank were perfectly motionless. " I was mistaken," said the astonished child ; and she again bent down to remove her stockings. But the mysterious voice immediately began again, and seemed to be in the grotto. Bernadette raised her head, and looked before her..... She would have cried out ; but emotion choked her voice ; stupified by what she saw, she grew weak and fell on her knees.

* Wooden shoes.

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A wonderful apparition appeared before her at the end of the grotto, in the excavation which we have described.

Just then the Angelus bell resounded from all sides.

IV.

THE FIRST APPARITION.

In the midst of a dazzling light, a Lady admirably beautiful appeared to the eyes of the child.

She was clad in a long white robe, all resplendent and of a material unknown to earth.

A large plain white veil, like the dress, covered her head and shoulders and the whole body reaching to the ground. The feet, were bare, and seemed to rest on the wild rose-bush. Two bright roses of a gold color adorned the upper part of the Virgin's feet. Her hands were clasped on her breast as if in fervent prayer ; she held a long rosary, as white as snow, whose beads seemed joined by a chain of glittering gold ; a beautiful golden cross as bright as the gold of the roses, hung from the rosary.

Entranced with admiration, the humble child could not believe her eyes. From the midst of the light, the beautiful Lady smiled most sweetly on her. She seemed to salute her with her hands, and kindly bent her head.

Bernadette rubbed her eyes, instinctively

sought in her pocket, took out her rosary ; and, to protect herself, attempted to make the sign of the cross. But her hand fell powerless. At that moment, the Lady took, with the right hand, the cross of the rosary which hung from her left wrist, made the sign of the cross, and by a smile of ineffable benignity seemed to say to the child ; do as I do. The child imitated her, and her arm freely obeyed. The Lady clasped the hands and passed the beads of her rosary between her fingers. Bernadette recited the chapelet. Her sister had been watching her for a moment. She saw her pale, with eyes fixed ; she remarked the double movement of her arm, the motionless and attentive attitude of prayer. " Stop, said she to her companion ; look at Bernadette praying."

" What an idea to come here to pray ! answered the other. It is quite enough to pray in church !—Bah let her do it. She can do nothing else." They paid no farther attention to Bernadette, who was all the time motionless, on her knees, looking at the mysterious Lady.

The Lady, with ravishing grace and goodness beckoned her to approach. Bernadette dare not stir. At last, the Lady held out her arms, gently bent her head, smiled as if saying farewell.....

Bernadette saw once more the cold rock, the bare rose-bush, heard and saw her companions playing. The heavenly vision had disappeared.

Bernadette arose, bared her feet quickly, crossed the stream, and approaching her two companions, said to them in a voice still much agitated : " Have you seen nothing ? " And as the children quietly answered that they had not, she was silent ; and all three together set out on the road to Lourdes.

However, questioned by her little sister, she finally related to her the details of what she had seen, but making her promise to keep the secret. Her mother having heard of the occurrence, would not believe it, and told Bernadette that it was all imagination, and forbade her to return to the grotto. She feared that it might be some snare of the devil for the child. Bernadette kept silent ; but her little heart was oppressed. At the evening prayers, she burst out sobbing, when she came to her favorite invocation ! " O MARY conceived without sin pray for us who have recourse to thee. "—She, dear child, did not however suspect that the apparition in the grotto was the Blessed Virgin ; but since she had seen the " beautiful Lady," she felt an irresistible desire to return to the grotto, in the hope of seeing her again.

V

THE SECOND APPARITION.

The Sunday following, Bernadette's sister, and some other children, begged Mother Soubirons

so hard that she allowed Bernadette to return to the grotto. The weather was very fine.

A thought had, however, come into these little heads: "Perhaps it is something wicked?" said the children to Bernadette. "In any case you must throw some holy water on it. If it is the devil, he will go away. You will say to it: 'If you come from God, approach; if you come from the devil, go away.'" In the depth of her heart, Bernadette was sure that the apparition did not come from the devil. She, however, promised to do as her little companions advised. They started; on passing by the church, they took some holy water in a little bottle; and reached the grotto.

Nothing was to be seen. "Let us kneel down," said Bernadette, "and say our beads." The holy prayer had no sooner commenced than the face of the Blessed Virgin's little friend brightened suddenly, illuminated with joy; her eyes were fixed on the hollow in the grotto with an indescribable expression of happiness; the radiant Lady was there before her, as the first time, surrounded with splendor, with smiling face, and the beautiful white and gold rosary passing silently through her fingers.

"Look!" then said Bernadette, much agitated "look! there she is!" But the children saw nothing. "O, see!" added she, "see; she smiles and she salutes me."

Then, one of the little children placed the

little bottle of holy water in the hands of the kneeling Bernadette. The latter rose, shaking the holy water several times, quickly, towards the mysterious Lady. "If you come from God," said she, in a loud voice, "approach." Strange to say, her companions heard nothing, and did not even perceive that she spoke.

The holy water reached first the rose bush, then the feet of the Virgin, who smiling still more sweetly, advanced to the edge of the niche bending towards the child with an expression of ravishing sweetness. Bernadette said a second time: "If you come from GOD, approach;" but she dared not add the rest, so evident was it to her that what she saw could not come from hell.

"See, now," said Bernadette, "when I throw the holy water, she raises her eyes to heaven and bends towards me." And, a moment after: "You do not see her? she is there; she is looking at us . . . she smiles . . . Oh! she is so beautiful! . . . Now, she takes her beads; she crosses herself."

Bernadette knelt down again, made the sign of the cross, remained motionless, and artlessly began her rosary. Kneeling, with clasped hands, her rosary between the fingers, she smiled, and bright tears rolled down amidst her smiles.

The Blessed Virgin received the child's simple prayer, she smiled on her a last time, and disappeared.

VI.

THE THIRD APPARITION, AND THE FIRST WORDS
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Good little Bernadette went home, her heart overflowing with joy ; she did not yet know who her heavenly visitor was. The other children felt afraid. " We are afraid, Bernadette," said they to her. " Do not let us go there any more."

Her father and mother could not believe in the reality of the apparition. " She is a child," said they. " She thought she saw it, but she saw nothing. It is a child's fancy."

Still the child's statements were so firm and simple, that they no longer ventured to forbid her going to the grotto.

Several persons came to the house to question Bernadette, and all went away convinced of the reality of her vision in the grotto.

On Thursday, Madame Millet, and a young girl belonging to the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, Antoinette Peyret, came very early to take Bernadette with them to the grotto. They all three assisted at the half-past five o'clock Mass, and set out from there to the Rocks of Massabielle. " It is undoubtedly, some soul from Purgatory asking for Masses," thought they. In this thought, they provided themselves with a taper ; and, lest Bernadette should not

understand what was said to her, they took with them paper and ink.

However, a supernatural strength seemed to animate Bernadette ; her companions could not keep up with her ; hence she arrived some minutes before them in front of the sacred grotto. She knelt down in her usual place, a little way from the rock, and began her rosary, watching the cavern, which was still empty. All at once she uttered a cry of joy ; a heavenly radiance illuminated the cavern ; a voice was heard calling her ; and immediately there appeared, standing a few paces above her, the admirable Virgin. As usual she was smiling and charming. She bent towards Bernadette with a motherly air, and, by a movement of the hand, signed for her to approach.

Antoinette and Madame Millet then arrived and saw the face of the child entirely transfigured. They stopped, through a feeling of respect. Bernadette saw them. "She is there," said she to them, softly. "She signs for me to advance." "Ask her," said the two women, "ask her if she is angry that we are with you. If so, we shall retire." After having consulted for a moment the invisible Lady, Bernadette said to them : "You may remain." And both knelt piously beside the child, lighting their blessed tapers.

Bernadette heeded nothing more but the sacred apparition. "Advance towards her, since

she calls you, and makes signs to you," again said the two women. "Approach her. Ask her who she is ; why she come here ? Is she a soul from Purgatory asking for prayers and Masses ? Tell her to write what she desires, on this paper. We are disposed to do all that she wishes, all that may be necessary for her repose."

Bernadette was no longer afraid. The smile which had responded to her little exorcism on Sunday had dispelled all her uneasiness. Little Bernadette, therefore, took the paper, ink and pen, arose and advanced towards the Apparition, holding out these objects. The two women arose to follow her, but Bernadette, without turning back, made them a sign not to advance.

"My Lady," said the little girl, with simplicity, "if you have anything to tell me, would you have the goodness to write here who you are and what you desire ?"

A moment after, Bernadette let her arms fall slowly, waited for a little, and came back with the paper. "Well, what did she answer ?" "Oh ! she smiled, and then said to me : '*What I have to tell you, I need not write. Only do me the favor to come here every day for fifteen days.*' I promised, and she said : '*And I promise to make you happy, not in this world, but in the other.*'"

While Bernadette returned towards her companions, the Blessed Virgin followed her with

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the eyes, then, for a moment, looked tenderly at Antoinette, who was a member of the Sodality of the Children of MARY. "She is looking at you, now," said Bernadette, to the young girl, who remained awe-stricken. "Ask her," said the two women again, "if it would displease her if we came with you every day during the fifteen days." Bernadette put the question; and the Blessed Virgin, true Mother of Mercy, answered: "*They may return with you; they, and others besides. I wish to see many persons here.*" And she disappeared.

VII.

THE FIRST THREE DAYS OF THE TWO MIRACULOUS WEEKS.

Bernadette's two companions related to her parents all that they had seen and heard. Much affected, they began to believe. Bernadette repeated all that the Lady of the grotto had said, and how she had made the promise to return there every day for fifteen days.

That day was a market-day at Lourdes. The news of the apparitions in the grotto of Massabielle spread amongst the crowd, and, by the next day, the wonderful details agitated, not only the whole town of Lourdes, but the mountains and valleys, all the country around.

"If the apparition is real," was generally said

"it is certainly the Blessed Virgin who is appearing to Bernadette."

On Friday, the 19th, when at dawn, little Bernadette accompanied by her father and mother, arrived in front of the grotto, she found about a hundred persons already there. From that time, the crowd of spectators increased every morning; on the 20th there were four or five hundred at the grotto; on Sunday, the 21st several thousands. They were everywhere around the grotto, and even on the common beyond the stream.

The child's mother had the happiness of seeing with her own eyes her daughter as if entranced, in ecstasy, by the presence of the apparition; like all the spectators, she saw that little face, so humble and so plain in its natural state, all at once illuminated and transfigured.

All who saw Bernadette in ecstasy declared that they never beheld anything like it on earth, and that long years after, their impression of it was as vivid as on the first day.

As to the little seer (*voyante*), as she was henceforth called, she knelt down before the grotto, took her rosary and prayed as if she were alone. Everything about her breathed innocence, truth, and candor. The heavenly apparition disappeared almost always at the instant when the favored little one had finished her rosary. The people were always silent and respectful.

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On Sunday, the 21st, the Blessed Virgin appeared as usual to her little friend. She smiled at Bernadette, and graciously saluted her with her head and by a gesture of the hand.

At one moment the apparition seemed to draw back, and as if to glide into the interior of the rock. So as not to lose sight of her, the child approached the edge of the cavern, dragging herself along on her knees; and noticing that the face of the beautiful Lady had all at once become sad and sorrowful; "What is the matter?" she ventured to say; "what must be done?"—"Pray for sinners," answered the Mother of Mercy. And the spectators saw two large tears roll down Bernadette's cheeks, whilst her eyes, fixed on MARY, remained wide open. Joy soon appeared again on the child's face, because that of the Virgin had recovered its grace and serenity. After which, she disappeared.

VIII.

CONTRADICTIONS AND PERSECUTIONS SUFFERED BY POOR LITTLE BERNADETTE.

The works of the good God are always crossed by the rage of the devil and by the ignorance or the passions of men. The great things which were passing and being prepared at the grotto of Lourdes, for the glory of God and the salvation

of souls, were therefore promptly attacked and misrepresented.

Some cried out "Superstition, illusion, folly." "This little girl is insane," said they: "she must be shut up." This child is playing a disgraceful farce. Justice should interfere. Finally, others a little more moderate and better posted, admitted that they could not doubt either of the child's candor or probity. "It is simply," added they, "a natural phenomenon, which comes within the range of medicine. Let a physician examine the thing closely, and certainly these so-called visions will melt away like snow in the sun."

The town of Lourdes was literally turned upside down. The commissary of police, in the afternoon of that same Sunday, as the people were coming out from Vespers, sent one of his agents, who making his way through the crowd which surrounded and was questioning poor Bernadette, had the courage to arrest her "in the name of the law," and to the just indignation of all. "Follow me to the commissary of police," said he to the child.

But it was the fox caught by the dove. The crafty commissary used every means: employed all to embarrass the poor child. As she told the truth, she could only answer according to the truth: and it was this truth which disconcerted and enraged the commissary. He did not want the truth: and on whatever side

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 nerable; the Blessed Virgin was evidently
 assisting her privileged child.

The examination had lasted a full hour. The
 commissary was furious. Outside the crowd
 were indignant and were becoming threatening.
 Father Soubirous appeared to claim his child;
 "For this time, I pardon her," said the commis-
 sary; "but in case of a second offence, she shall
 be put in prison. You know that the *Procureur*
Imperial does not jest." And, dismissed, by
 a brutal gesture, the father and child returned
 home, to the great satisfaction of the crowd.

Physicians and those who modestly called
 themselves "men of science," succeeded no
 better. On Sunday, the 21st, one of the best
 physicians of Lourdes, Doctor Dozon, wished
 to observe himself the "cateleptic or hysterical
 symptoms," which, according to him, must ex-
 plain all. He therefore went early to the grotto,
 and placed himself near Bernadette, so as to
 better examine them.

He was bewildered: not one of the symptoms
 of these strange diseases, perfectly known to
 medicine, were here manifested. All absorbed as
 she was in the contemplation of the Blessed
 Virgin, the child had however perfect con-
 sciousness of all that was passing around her:
 her taper going out, she immediately held out
 her hand to have it relighted, and some one
 attempting to touch the rose-bush in the cavern

with a stick, she quickly made a sign to stop, and her face expressed fear. "This," said the doctor, "is not the stiffness of catalepsy, nor the hallucination with its unconsciousness; this is an extraordinary case of an order altogether unknown to medicine."

He took hold of Bernadette's arm; it was flexible and perfectly supple. He felt her pulse: the pulsation was tranquil, regular, entirely normal. No symptom whatever of disease. Decidedly "science" was at fault.

In spite of this, the opposition continued and became real persecution. The commissary of police was indignant. A warrant was issued against the innocent child; and Bernadette, declared insane, by the prefect, was on the point of being taken from her parents to be shut up in a lunatic asylum. Without the truly sacerdotal energy of the venerable pastor of Lourdes, the crime would have been perpetrated. "This child is innocent," cried the priest, indignantly, when the *Procureur Imperial* and the mayor of Lourdes, came to announce the prefect's decision; "this child is innocent. You could find no pretext upon which to prosecute her. Such a measure will be the most odious persecution, the more odious that it strikes a poor defenceless creature. The prefect cannot, by any law, have Bernadette arrested. As a priest, as pastor of this parish, I owe a duty to all, and especially to the weakest.

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"I know my duty as a pastor. Go, then, and tell the Prefect that his officers will find me at the threshold of this poor family, and that they shall have to pass over my body, before they touch a hair of this poor little girl's head. Make inquiries, you are free to do so; but if you wish to strike the innocent, know, that before reaching the least and humblest of my flock, it is by me you must commence." They dared not go farther, and the innocent child was saved by the Blessed Virgin in the first place, then, by the courage and faith of the Abbe Peyramale.

That excellent priest had more right than any other to take Bernadette's cause in hand, for, since the commencement of the apparitions, he had maintained the most prudent, the most perfect reserve, relative to the occurrences in the grotto. He had exacted this same reticence from his assistants, leaving to time in the first place, and then to his Bishop, the care of determining in a definite manner the real character of the mysterious apparitions.

As to Bernadette, she had much to suffer before the evidence of the truth and power of the immaculate Virgin should have triumphed over all obstacles.

One day, during the apparition, the commissary of police and the general of militia carried their insolence so far as to attempt to put themselves, so to say, between Bernadette and the

Mother of God. They placed themselves before the child in her ecstasy, and tried to disturb her. But her indignant god-mother energetically defended the freedom of the little one, who was doing no harm and whom none had the right to annoy.

Several times Bernadette's parents were threatened, as well as herself. But nothing could subdue the quiet firmness of the poor child. This was what reassured her frightened relatives. She repeated to them: "They will not do all that they say, and God is stronger than they are. Do not fear. Do as I do; I am not afraid. If they put me in prison, they will have the trouble of taking me out again."

This annoyance and persecution lasted for several months. But let us return to the story of the marvelous apparitions.

IX. THE FIFTH DAY OF THE FORTNIGHT.

On returning home, after the stormy scene with the commissary of police, Bernadette's father had forbidden her to return to the grotto. With a swelling heart, the child submitted. She knew no more how to disobey, than she did how to lie.

On Monday, February 22nd, she was sent early to school, where other trials awaited her.

Besides the privation which had been imposed upon her she was grieved at seeing herself turned into ridicule by some of the school children.

The poor child knew not what to do ; she did not wish to disobey her father and yet she thought she was doing wrong in not keeping the promise which she had made to the mysterious Lady, so beautiful, so kind, so beloved. The good God himself took care to remove the difficulty. When Bernadette came out of school to go home, a strange, irresistible force took possession of her, and urged her like a leaf carried by the wind, towards the grotto. She reached there without well knowing how.

A considerable crowd had been there all the morning, vainly awaiting the little *seer*.

But alas ! Bernadette might pray, watch, say the rosary over and over again ; nothing appeared. A long time passed thus. Much grieved the child went away in tears. Assailed by a thousand questions, she answered, her eyes red with crying : " To-day the Lady did not appear to me. I saw nothing." Many people mocked her. " Other days," said Bernadette, I saw her as I see you ; and we spoke together, she and I ; but to-day, she is not there, I do not know why ! "

She returned home, praying and weeping. " Did I commit any fault ? " she asked herself. But her conscience reproached her nothing. In spite of her grief, she was full of hope.

"Where were you?" asked her father, the moment she entered. She related all that had passed. "And you say that some force carried you there against your will?" "Yes," answered Bernadette. "That must be true," thought he, "for this child has never lied." And after a moment's reflection, he made up his mind. "Well!" said he to his daughter, "since that is the case, I do not forbid you to go to the grotto. I give you leave to do so."

This unhopèd for permission filled our dear Bernadette with joy.

X.

BERNADETTE AT THE BLESSED VIRGIN'S FEET.

In the first part of the miraculous fortnight Bernadette received no order from the Blessed Virgin. She usually remained kneeling on the stone, at the entrance to the grotto. She was saying Hail Marys on the beads of her rosary.

In Bernadette's hands, the beads of the rosary moved sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, often ceasing; and wonderful thing! whilst she said her Hail Marys, the eager spectators, who followed the slightest movements of her face, saw her lips almost always motionless.

At certain moments, she seemed more deeply absorbed in the vision, as if listening to her. Several times she must have spoken to the gra-

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cious Lady. No ear heard her. One day, she said to a person, with much surprise: "How! did you not hear me? I spoke so loud!" At intervals she renewed the beautiful and touching sign of the cross.

For several days, her left hand held a lighted taper; whilst the right moved the beads of the rosary.

One morning, a cold, brisk north wind made the flame of her taper flicker and threatened to extinguish it. The child instinctively held out her hands to protect it. Suddenly, the wind, striking the rock, blew directly on herself, and sent the flame against her open hand. It licked her fingers, and was seen passing between them. "She is burning!" said the people anxiously; "oh! poor little one! She is burning!" There was not the slightest contraction of her face, nor the least movement of her hand, and the fire left her face.

XI.

APPARITION OF TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD—
FIRST SECRET, AND DEMAND FOR A SHRINE.

In appearing thus continually to little Bernadette, the Blessed Virgin daily took more powerful possession of the blessed child, prepared her for her mission.

The Mother of God was about to reveal,

through the ministry of this child, the merciful designs which caused her to descend to the grotto ; and the exterior acts, required of Bernadette for the accomplishment of her mission began on Tuesday, February 23rd, the sixth day of the miraculous fortnight.

The Blessed Virgin, whom Bernadette had not yet recognized, had already spoken to her, it is true, in the preceding apparitions, and the child had also spoken to her ; but in these mysterious conversations, the Queen of Heaven had not yet uttered any precise command. She began to do so on Tuesday, the 23rd.

In the midst of a dense crowd of from eight to ten thousand persons, Bernadette arrived as usual at the grotto, about daybreak. She had knelt down in her usual place, outside the cavern ; in her left hand was a blessed taper, in the other her rosary.

Suddenly she heard the blessed voice of the Queen of Heaven, calling her. "*Bernadette !*" "Here I am," immediately answered the child. "*I have a secret to tell you, for yourself only, which concerns you alone,*" then said the Mother of God. "*Do you promise me never to reveal it to any one ?*" "I promise you."

"*And now, my daughter,*" added the Blessed Virgin, "*go and tell the priests that a shrine must be erected here, and that they must come here in procession.*" These words ended the apparition for that day.

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On leaving the Rocks of Massabielle, Bernadette immediately repaired to the pastor's house. The latter had as yet never spoken to her. "Are you not Bernadette?" said he to her, gravely and almost sternly, as soon as he saw her coming towards him. "Yes, it is I, sir," quietly answered the humble messenger of the Blessed Virgin. "Well, Bernadette, what do you want of me? What brought you here?" "I came, Father, on the part of 'the Lady,' who appears to me in the grotto of Massabielle!" The priest seemed to treat the matter very lightly and not to believe it. The child repeated with an air of candor, and with great confidence, the words of the apparition. "And you do not know this Lady's name?" said the worthy pastor. "No," answered Bernadette. "She did not tell me who she was." "Those who believe you, imagine that it is the Blessed Virgin *Mary*. But take care; you alone say you see her; if you falsely pretend to see her in the grotto, you are taking the way never to see her in Heaven." "I do not know if it is the Blessed Virgin, Father," answered the child; "but I see the vision as I see you, and she speaks to me as truly as you speak to me. And I come to tell you, from her, that she wants a shrine to be raised to her at the Rocks of Massabielle, where she appears to me."

Much agitated, the good Father Peyramale made her repeat the very words used by the

Lady at the grotto. "After having confided to me the secret which concerns me and which I can not reveal to any one," said the child, "the Lady added: *And now, go and tell the priest that a shrine must be erected here, and that people come in procession to it.*"

After a moment's reflection, the pastor replied: "I can not take your word for this, you understand. Tell this Lady that she must make herself known. If she is the Blessed Virgin, let her show it by some miracle. She appears to you, you tell me, on a wild rose-bush? It is now February; tell her, from me, that if she wishes a shrine built, she must make the rose-bush bloom." And he dismissed her.

What had passed between the child and the priest was soon known in the town. Curiosity and excitement were general; and several free-thinkers of the neighborhood resolved to go henceforth to the grotto, in order to assist at the exposure of the "superstition."

XII.

APPARITION OF WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH— SECOND SECRET, AND EXORTATION TO PENANCE.

A prominent citizen of Lourdes, of upright, but somewhat sceptical mind, related to Mr. Henri Lasserre, how, on that day, he was

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convinced by the evidence of the supernatural. He did not see the rose-bush bloom, but he saw Bernadette in ecstasy; he saw the heavenly reflection on the face of the humble child; and his good faith returned.

"I reached the grotto," said he, "very much disposed to investigate, and, to tell the truth, to have a good laugh, expecting a farce or something ridiculous. I placed myself in the first row. The crowd was immense. About sunrise, Bernadette arrived. I was near her. She knelt down, without heeding the crowd which surrounded her, as if she had been alone. Very soon her look seemed to receive and reflect an unknown light. Before this transfiguration of the child, all my preconceived denials fell to the ground at once, and gave place to an extraordinary feeling which took possession of me, in spite of myself. I felt certain that a mysterious being was there. Suddenly and entirely transfigured, Bernadette was no longer Bernadette. Her attitude, her slightest gesture had a superhuman majesty. She smiled at the invisible being.

"I was no less moved than the other spectators. Like them, I held my breath to try and hear the conversation which was taking place between the vision and the child.

"At a certain moment, Bernadette advanced on her knees, from the spot where she was praying, that is to say, from the banks of the

Gave, to the end of the grotto. This was about fifteen feet. Whilst she thus ascended the somewhat steep side of the rock, those who were in her way very distinctly heard her pronounce these words: 'Penance!.....penance! !...penance!!!'

The more than impartial witness who relates this touching scene, saw Bernadette come out of her ecstasy and immediately become again, a poor little girl, almost in rags, in no way distinguished from other peasant children. He was the receiver of taxes at Lourdes, and it was he, who on the Sunday previous, had assisted at Bernadette's examination by the commissary of police.

What had passed during this sixth apparition? Had the child delivered the pastor's message? The rose-bush had not blossomed.

When, on leaving the grotto, Bernadette presented herself at the pastoral residence, Father Peyramale, with his usual calmness, said to her, "Well, did you see the vision to-day? and what did she say?" "I saw the vision," answered the child, "and I said to her: 'Our pastor asks you for some proofs, for instance to make the rose-bush under your feet blossom; because my word does not suffice for the priests, and they will not trust me.' Then she smiled but without speaking. Then, she told me to pray for sinners, and commanded me to come up to the end of the grotto. And she said three time:

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‘Penance!....penance!!!’ I repeated these words dragging myself to the end of the grotto on my knees. There she revealed to me a second secret which concerns only myself, then, she disappeared.” “And what did you find at the end of the grotto?” “I looked after, she had disappeared (for while she is there, I notice nothing but herself, she absorbe me,) and I saw nothing but the rock, and in the ground a few blades of grass growing up in the sand.” “Let us wait,” said the pastor.

But in this recital Bernadette omitted some interesting particulars, of which we cannot deprive the pious reader.

Whilst the child was absorbed in the ecstasy, she was seen to kiss the ground, several times, ascending on her knees the rugged rock which arose before her, as far as the end of the grotto, on the left. The Blessed Virgin had said to her: “You will pray to God for sinners.....You will kiss the ground for the conversion of sinners.” And she signed to her to advance on her kness.

Bernadette, raising her head, after having kissed the ground, looked for the Apparition; she saw her slowly drawing back and followed her, renewing her humiliating kisses of penance. She went in under the arch and remained some time motionless. At this moment, she saw the Virgin so near her, she said, that by raising and extending her arm, she could have touched her feet.

Bernadette again knelt down, still kissing the ground, and returned to her contemplation before the niche.

Subsequently, penance for sinners was again asked of Bernadette. She went up and came down once, during each apparition, and always in silence ; that first time only she was heard as she went pronouncing the words:—Penance ! penance ! penance !

One day, she made several of these laborious ascent.

She was asked the first day :—" But why did you walk on your knees and kiss the ground ?

" The Vision commanded me to do it ; and it was as a penance for myself and others "

" Why did you make us a sign to kiss the ground ? "

" The Vision seemed to say that you all should do penance for sinners. "

The heart of Mary was revealed. It was sinners who she called by Bernadette's prayer and humiliation. It was sinners she also sought by the miracles which were to be performed, in hundreds, in that favored grotto.

XIII.

APPARITION OF THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25TH—
THE THIRD SECRET AND THE MIRACULOUS
FOUNTAIN.

It was the eighth day of the fortnight. Every spot in the vicinity was crowded with ardent eager people. When little Bernadette appeared, every one, the sceptics, as well as the believers, instinctively uncovered their heads. The kind, merciful, and most admirable Virgin Mary vouchsafed, that day like the others to keep her appointment in the grotto.

She began the conversation on this occasion, by confiding to her dear Bernadette her third secret: "My daughter," said she to her, "I wish to confide to you, for yourself alone, a last secret; like the other, you are not to reveal it to any one in the world.

Bernadette heard, with joyful heart, the ineffable melody of that voice so sweet, so motherly, so tender, which of old, at Nazareth, charmed the ears and heart of the child Jesus.

"And now," said the Blessed Virgin to her, after a moment's silence, "drink and wash yourself at the spring, and eat of the grass which is there."

Bernadette looked round her in astonishment. There was no spring in the grotto; there had never been one. A sandy and arid pile, strewn

with fragments of rock, which then obstructed the interior of the cavern, and reached to the roof, a height of about seventy-five cubic feet. Without losing sight of the Apparition, Bernadette was moving toward the Gave, a river near the grotto, when, by a glance and a gesture of the hand, the Virgin pointed out the place where she was to go.

"Do not go there," said she to her; "I did not tell you to drink at the Gave; go to the fountain, it is here." And extending her hand, she pointed out to the child that same dry corner, to which, the evening before, she had made her ascend on her knees. It was at the end of the grotto, on the left of the spectator.

Bernadette went up, and when she was near the rock, she looked for the fountain. Not finding it and wishing to obey, she told her embarrassment to the heavenly Lady by a glance. In obedience to another sign, the child bent down and scraping the earth with her little hands, began to make a hollow in the ground.

All at once the bottom of the little cavity became damp: coming from unknown depths, across the rocks and through the thick of the earth, a mysterious water appeared beneath the hand of the child of Mary, and soon filled the little hollow which might contain about a glass full. Mingling with the earth, it was quite muddy, and poor Bernadette raised it to her lips three times, without having courage to

taste it. The radiant Apparition presided over this strange scene, and followed the child with an attentive glance. The latter at length overcame her repugnance ; she drank the muddy water and batted her face with it.

The spectators understood nothing of all this ; " Oh ! see ! " cried some of them ; " see how she daubs her face, poor child ! " Other said : " She is losing her mind ; there is no sense in that ! " At this moment, with her wet fingers, Bernadette plucked and ate some blades of grass which grew there.

Immediately the water of the rising spring overflowed the banks of the little pond hollowed by the child, and began to flow like a fine thread, which, during the first day, only moistened the sand. The wet mark which it traced on the soil slowly, insensible lengthened, in the direction of the Gave.

With her feeble hand, Bernadette had unconsciously opened the source of cures and of miracles.

The Blessed Virgin rewarding her little workwoman with a smile, disappeared, all radiant, and the faithful, obedient Bernadette went home as usual.

The astonished spectators wished to see the miraculous fountain, and to soak their handkerchiefs in it. Next day, the Blessed Virgin's fountain, visibly increasing, flowed already a finger's breadth. At the end of a few days, it

gushed out of the earth, pure and limpid, about as broad as a child's arm. It then ceased to expand.

The miraculous water of Lourdes has been analyzed by skilful chemists; it is a pure, virgin water a natural water devoid of all mineral properties.

XIV.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26TH—THE FIRST MIRACULOUS CURE.

That day the Immaculate Virgin did not appear to her dear child. Every one regarded Bernadette with a respect and reverence which amounted to veneration; when she passed, people said, in her hearing: "There is the Saint."

MARY, the mother of humility and meekness, undoubtedly wished to fortify her child against the danger of vain-glory: she left her to pine in wishes, in tears, in prayers; she would not appear. Humbled and grieved, Bernadette was obliged to go home; she cried all the way.

In place of the usual Apparition, the crowd could see the spring, a living testimony of the omnipotence of the mysterious Lady. The good pastor of Lourdes had asked for a sign, instead of the trifling one which he had felt bound to ask, the Blessed Virgin had given him a much

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greater one, and not only to him, but to all, to the wicked as well as the good.

On that Friday, the 26th, the miraculous water performed its first miracle: a miracle of the first order, proved, proclaimed in the first place by science, then by ecclesiastical authority.

There was at Lourdes a poor quarry-man, named Bourriette, who, twenty year before this had had his eye terribly injured by the explosion of a mine. He came near dying, and in spite of the enlightened and assiduous care of Doctor Dozons, the same who examined Bernadette in her extasy, the poor miner's sight had grown worse from year to year, so much so that at the period of which we speak, his right eye could not distinguisd a man from a tree. Known and beloved in the whole town, Bourriette was a man of faith, a true Christian. He was married and the father of a family.

He had heard of the marvellous things which were occuring at the grotto, and in particular of the spring which had gushed forth.

"Go and get me some of that water," said he to his daughter. "The Blessed Virgin, if it be her, has only to wish it, and I shall be cured." Half an hour after, the child brought a little of the still muddy water. "Father," said she, "this is only muddy water." "Never mind," said the good Bourriette, beginning to pray.

He rubs his lost eye with the water He gives a loud cry, a cry of joy and gladness. He

begins to tremble with emotion. The darkness which, for twenty years, had deprived him of sight, was dispelled ; there only remained a sort of slight dimness, like the mists of the morning.

He continued praying, and bathing his eye ; the mist gradually disappeared, and he could clearly distinguish objects. He was cured !

" I am cured ! " cried he, running up to Doctor Dozons, next day, on the street.

" Impossible," said the doctor. " You have an organic affection which makes your disease incurable. The treatment which I made you follow was only to ease your pain ; it could not restore your sight."

" It is not you who has cured me," answered the quarry-man, still much agitated ; " it is the Blessed Virgin of the grotto."

" That Bernadette has ecstasies which cannot be explained, is certain," said the doctor, shrugging his shoulders ; " I have verified that myself. But that the water which gushed forth from the grotto from some unknown cause, suddenly cure incurable diseases, is not possible." So saying, he took out his memorandum book, and wrote some words in it with a lead pencil.

" Stay," said he to Bourriette, putting his hand over his left eye ; " if you can read this, I will believe you." The passers by had gathered round them. Bourriette immediately read without the slightest hesitation : "*Bourriette has an incurable amanrosis, and he will never be cured.*"

The doctor stood astonished, bewildered. "I cannot deny it," cried he; it is a miracle, a real miracle, without disparagement to myself and to my brothers of the Faculty. I am amazed; but the fact is evident; it is beyond all that poor human science can do."

Louis Bourriette's cure was all the more remarkable that the miracle had left all the scars of the wound. The quarry-man, almost crazed with joy related the details to all who would listen.

XV.

APPARITIONS OF THE LAST DAYS OF THE FORTNIGHT.

It was near the end of the sacred fortnight. The Blessed Virgin continued to appear every morning to her dear little Bernadette, and crowds came from twenty and thirty miles round.

Everything went on in the most orderly manner. People drank at the fountain, sang hymns and prayed.

In each of these apparitions, Bernadette renewed the acts of penance and of obedience which we have related. At the Blessed Virgin's command, she drank at the fountain; and sometimes she was seen to drink several times.

Since the fourth apparition, Bernadette, on

arriving every morning, lit a blessed taper and held it in her left hand, whilst the Blessed Virgin appeared. It was a lady of the town who first lent her one ; soon her aunts gave her each in turn their Sodality taper.

The devotion of candles is as old as the Church. The lighted taper is a beautiful symbol : the white and virgin wax of which it is formed, signifies the most pure humanity of which the Saviour took in Mary's womb, and which, united to the divinity, is the light of the world.

The lighted taper also represents the Christian, who, enlightened, inflamed with the ardor of true faith and the love of Jesus Christ, should also, be consumed before the good God as a victim of penance and of love.

On Tuesday, March 2d, Bernadette went once more to the pastor of Lourdes and renewed the request made by *the Lady*.

"She wants," said the child, "a shrine to be built at the grotto and people to come there in procession."

"I believe you," said he to Bernadette. "But what you ask in the name of the Apparition does not depend on me. That depends on His Lordship, the Bishop, whom I have already informed of what is taking place. I will go and apprise him of what you ask. It is for him alone to act."

Mr. Peyramale, in fact, went to Tarbes : he laid the facts before the venerable Bishop Lau-

rence, who resolved to exceed him, if possible, in prudence, to let the fruit ripen and to content himself, for the time, by establishing a judicial investigation, at which all the facts, past, present, and future, would be examined with the most scrupulous impartiality, whilst awaiting an official decision.

XVI

MARVELLOUS CLOSE OF THE FORTNIGHT—RESUSCITATION OF LITTLE JUSTIN.

The last of the fifteen days during which Berndette did the Queen of Heaven *the favor* of coming to the grotto, on the day which was to close this long series of wonders, was the subject of universal conjecture.

It was Thursday, a market-day at Lourdes. All the morning, long before dawn, the road to the grotto was crowded ; by sunrise, more than twenty thousand persons were already waiting, and others were continually arriving

According to custom, Bernadette heard Mass before starting. On the summit of the rock, a gendarme awaited her ; he walked before her, with sword drawn, to clear the way for her through the crowd.

When the child prostrated herself, all the people by a unanimous impulse, fell on their knees. An unusual silence reigned amongst the multitude.

Soon the ecstasy commenced, serene, radiant, as usual. The child went to drink at the fountain, and kneeling and touching the ground with her lips, she performed the usual penance for sinners. But nothing new had yet signalized this apparition of March 4th. Bernadette was commanded as on the preceding days, to go and ask the priest to erect the shrine and to have processions. She begged the Apparition to tell her her name : the radiant Lady did not answer this question.

Then, by her salute to the vision, Bernadette announced that the Blessed Virgin was about to disappear ; she received her last farewell, her last smile ; saw for the last time the brightness of her aureola fade and become lost, sighed It was finished.

But the Immaculate Virgin did not wish that that memorable day should terminate without a brilliant manifestation of her goodness. A great miracle, a maternal miracle worthily marked the close of that fortnight of miracles.

A little child of two years old was dying in a poor cottage at Lourdes. His name was Justin. His father, Jean Bouhohorts, was a day-labourer.

He was in his agony ; his despairing father and mother were beside his cradle to see him die

The child's eyes had become glassy ; his limbs stiff and motionless ; his breathing was no longer perceptible.

"He is dead," said the father.

"If he is not dead," said a neighbor, "he is going to die, my poor friend. Go and cry somewhere else; I will wrap him up presently in this shroud."

But the mother wept no more. A wild hope had taken possession of her. "He is not dead," she cries, "and the Holy Virgin of the grotto will cure him for me."

"She is mad with grief," said the father, sorrowfully.

As for her, she seizes the already stiffening body of her child; she wraps it in her apron, and in spite of the efforts of her husband and her friends, she rushes out, running like a mad woman, praying aloud. "I am going to the Virgin," she cried, as she went out.

It was near five o'clock, and some hundreds of persons were still around the grotto and the fountain. The poor mother throws herself on her knees before the grotto, and prays with all her heart, then, dragging herself on her knees to the little basin, she takes the naked body of her dead or dying child, and plunges it entirely into the miraculous water. It was very cold, and the water was frozen.

A cry of fright, and murmurs of indignation burst from those around her. "The woman is mad," was said on all side; "she will kill her child." They seek to prevent her. She remains motionless, holding her child under the water.

"Let me alone! Let me alone!" she answered in an eager and supplicating voice, "I want to do what I can, and the good God and the Holy Virgin will do the rest." Little Justin was quite livid; he neither stirred nor gave any sign of life.

"The child is already dead," said the people. "Let her do it; it is a poor mother whom sorrow has crazed."

For a quarter of an hour, the supposed mad woman held the body of her son in the icy water which would have killed him in less than five minutes, even had he been in perfect health.

Nothing could move her, neither cries, nor supplications, nor threats. The body of the child was frozen, motionless. Full of faith, however, the mother drew him out of the water, wrapped him in her apron, and brought him home, praying all the time to the Blessed Virgin.

"You see he is dead," said the father.

"No," answered she; "he is not dead. The Blessed Virgin will restore him to us;" and she puts the child back into his cradle. A moment after, she bends over him: "He breathes!" cries she. The father rushes forward; his child was indeed breathing. His eyes were closed; but it was no longer death, it was no longer the agony; it was a sleep, peaceful sleep. The Blessed Virgin then said from the height of heaven to that christian mother, what Jesus said of old to the humble and faithful woman of Canaan; "Go in peace; thy faith hath saved thee."

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During the night, the breathing continued strong and regular, under the tender gaze of the mother, who did not sleep. The next day little Justin awoke ; his color was fresh and healthful, although he was still emaciated. His little eyes were full of life as he smiled on his happy mother.

The good neighbor, who, the evening before had made little Justin shroud, could not believe her eyes. She looked, looked again, and thought she was dreaming. " It is he," she cried. " It is really himself ! Poor little Justin ! " They all fell on their knees. The mother joined her child's little hands, that he might also return thanks to the Mother of God.

This miracle produced, in the town of Lourdes, and in all the surrounding country, a prodigious effect. Three skillful physicians confirmed the truth of it. In their eyes, three circumstances made the cure an actual miracle, a miracle of the first order.

It was thus that the Blessed Virgin wished to crown " her fortnight."

XVII.

“ RIDICULOUS EFFORTS OF THE POLICE TO
“ SUPPRESS FANATICISM AND SUPERSTITION.”

The police and the government vied with each other in zeal against the work of God, the

Blessed Virgin, and the new pilgrimage which had just been inaugurated by so many prodigies.

To the miraculous cure of Louis Bouriette, to the yet more touching one of little Justin, many other sudden and evidently supernatural cures were, so to say, adeed every day. In the very town of Lourdes, the eating-house keeper, Blaise Maumus, had been cured by the water of the spring, of an enormous wen which he had on his wrist. The widow Crozat, who had been for twenty years as deaf as a post, had suddenly recovered her hearing by making use of the miraculous water. Auguste Bordes, who had been for a long time lame from the effects of an accident, had his leg instantly straightened and restored to its natural vigor. These people and many others belonged to the town; every one knew them, and every one could point to the evidence of a miracle.

The devil, the police, and the government, could not tolerate such a state of things. They had first, naturally enough, attacked the innocent child whom the Blessed Virgin had chosen as the means of establishing the pilgrimage. Thanks to the divine protection, and thanks also to the good pastor, Father Peyramale, Bernadette had escaped the storm. They could not reach the invisible power which was at work in the grotto and causing the "scandal." They therefore resolved to seize on the grotto itself, the fountain, and the Rocks of Massa-

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bielle ; and, being unable to catch the bird, they would at least break the cage. The devil chose, for that fine exploit, the prefect, with his officers.

In consequence of, and from the height of his infallible authority, he excommunicated the grotto, and ordered the police magistrate to remove all the objects of piety that " superstition " had placed there.

This very evening, to protest against this impiety, the crowd Went, more numerous than ever, to the holy place, and soon the grotto was filled with flowers and lit up with a thousand tapers.

These absurd and unjust measures of the police increased the ardor of the police increased the ardor of the multitude who came every day to pray at the grotto. During the whole month of May, numbers of pious people came there to celebrate the mont of Mary. But to the great disappointment of the police, there was no disorder, not the slightest disturbance.

The prefectoral godernment then took a violent, and as they thought, a decisive step.

The approach to the grotto was forbidden, and there was a formal prohibition against drawing the water. On the summit of the rock where the chapel now stands, a stake was fixed bearing these words : "*All persons are forbidden to trespass on this property.*"

The policemen and gendarmery kept guard.

The injunction was defied ; persons went in by stealth at the risk of being discovered.

Against hell and against men, the cause of the apparitions was only defended by itself and by the peaceful belief of the people. The clergy did nothing against it ; but did not sustain it.

By a prudence now inexplicable by the witnesses of the popular enthusiasm which carried away even the impious themselves, and thanks to a disposition of Providence which would not have even an appearance of human action in the work of the Immaculate Virgin, not a priest was among the crowd during the whole time of the apparitions.

The pilgrimage of Lourdes was thus the exclusive work of the Blessed Virgin ; she herself did all. The police were defeated ; the government and the prefect were defeated. A formal order, coming from the supreme authority, permitted to the piety of the pilgrims, free access to the blessed grotto ; and since then, no attempt of human power has disturbed its peace and sweetness.

XVIII.

THE APPARITION OF MARCH 25TH—" I AM THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION."

After the close of the fortnight, little Bernadette went every day to the grotto. She said

her rosary there, like the other pilgrims ; long did her eyes remain fixed on the hollow of the rock ; but the sweet Vision appeared no more, and her transfigurations had ceased.

On the 25th of March, the feast of the Annunciation, Bernadette felt herself powerfully drawn towards the grotto, by a well-known attraction. She joyfully obeyed the interior call, and repaired the Massabielle. The solemnity of the day, the general, though uncertain hope that the Vision would return, had attracted from all parts a considerable crowd. Bernadette was surprised to find it so. She began to pray, with her beads in her hand, and soon a sudden thrill and the transfiguration of her face announced that the Virgin had appeared.

That was a great day in the history of the apparitions.

Bernadette had several times before asked the mysterious Lady to tell her, her name. She had only been answered by smiles. In this new ecstasy, remembering that the priest had earnestly requested her, if she saw her again, to ask her name, she said : " O Lady, will you have the goodness to tell me who you are, and what is your name ? "

The Vision seemed to become still more radiant ; always smiling, she smiled still more benignantly, that was her answer.

" My Lady," continued the child, " will you tell me who you are ? " Again a long and more

divine smile on the mute lips of the royal Apparition.

"O Lady, I entreat you to tell me your name; you must tell me who you are?"

From amidst the aureola, the virginal face smiled again on the child, the last, and doubtless the most ravishing smile. Then the Lady withdrew her gaze from Bernadette, unclasped her hands, slipped on her arm the rosary which had kept her fingers joined at her girdle, raised her hands and her radiant head; whilst her hands were joined on her breast, her head thrown back, and, more radiant than ever, her eyes piercing the glory of heaven, she said: "I AM THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION."

Without another glance at the child and without another smile, without the accustomed farewell, she disappeared in the same attitude, leaving to Bernadette's soul that image and that name.

Bernadette hastily, and with great joy, went to tell the pastor the name of the Lady, at length known. But she did not at all understand these words: Immaculate Conception; it was there, and the splendor of the apparition, that she had heard it for the first time in her life. And this unknown word did not make known to her who the lady was. She was afraid of forgetting it, and she repeated it all the way home: "I am the Immaculate Conception..... I am the Immaculate Conception."

The priest understood it; the Christian people understood it; they had not been mistaken. It was She, the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God.

XIX

THE APPARITION OF EASTER MONDAY, APRIL 5TH—THE MIRACLE OF THE LIGHTED TAPER.

Ten day after, on the 5th of April, Easter Monday, Bernadette, surrounded by a multitude of persons praying, was again favored by an apparition of the Immaculate Virgin. This time, there was a spectacle which excited more astonishment than all the former wonders, and which showed the divine character of the visions.

The child, kneeling, held in one hand a lighted taper, which was resting on the ground. Absorbed in the contemplation of the Queen of Heaven, her little hands came together, and without heeding what she was doing, she raised them a little and let them rest gently on the top of the lighted taper. And then the flame passed through her fingers which were slightly parted, and reaching above them, swayed to and fro by a slight breeze.

The people beside her were alarmed, and cried out: "She is burning!.....She is burning!" The child was smiling, motionless, serene.

"Let her alone," said some to those who

would have removed the taper ; “ evidently she does not feel the fire. Let us see what will happen.”

A physician was observing the child. Amazed, he took out his watch. The flame continued to burn ; the hands rested on it without the slightest quiver, for more than a quarter of an hour. All who were near enough to see Bernadette saw the flame rising above her fingers. They said softly ; “ A miracle ! a miracle ! ” Never yet had there been such excitement at the grotto. At last her hands parted ; the doctor took and examined them ; they were white and unhurt.

After the ecstasy, when Bernadette had returned to ordinary life, one of the spectators brought the flame of the still lighted candle near the child’s hand.—“ Oh ! you are burning me,” cried she, drawing back quickly.

So manifest and so touching a miracle left a deep impression. It was the seventeenth apparition, and the fifteenth of those to which the Virgin had called the multitude as witnesses of those interviews whose mystery was so profound a secret and yet so admirably revealed. On that day, there were more than nine thousand persons around Bernadette.

The divine spectacle ended for the crowds on the 5th of April. Bernadette was to see her once more, but almost alone, and long after that day, to be strengthened and consoled.

MIRACULOUS CURE OF YOUNG BUSQUET.

Miracles were manifested by the operation of the water of the grotto, like flowers by the action of the Spring dew. They were already, so to say, innumerable. Here is one, chosen from among a hundred others, and the authenticity of which has been proclaimed by physicians and at the same time by the ecclesiastical authority.

There was then at Nay, in the Basses-Pyrenees, a young lad of fifteen, named Henri Busquet, whose health had been destroyed and his blood vitiated, in consequence of typhoid fever, which, two years before had almost carried him off. An enormous abscess of a scrofulous nature, had formed on his neck, at the right side, and had insensibly reached the top of the chest and the lower part of the cheek. At the end of four months, as the result of an operation which was judged necessary, a hideous gaping sore extended over all the part diseased. Besides, swelling of the glands had come near the ulcer.

All treatment had been useless. The waters of Caunterets had done more harm than good. The poor child's condition grew worse every day.

Henry was very pious. He heard of the wonders of Lourdes and the miraculous spring.

Being unable to go there, he begged a good neighbor who was going to make the pilgrimage to bring him a little of the water. He was convinced that the Blessed Virgin would cure him ; the usual presentiment with those on whom the grace of a miracle is bestowed.

On the evening of the 28th of April the so much desired water was brought him. He knelt down with his father, his mother, his brothers and sisters, all faithful, simple, trusting Christians. Henri lay down, that the lotions might be more conveniently applied. The doctor had recommended that no cold water should be allowed to touch the ulcer. The consequence, he said, would be very serious. But to the pious child, the Blessed Virgin came before the doctor, and the water from the grotto was not " cold water." And it cured him.

The clergy still kept away from the grotto and aloof from all share in the movement. The orders of Mgr. Laurence were strictly observed throughout the diocese.

Not only did Mgr. Laurence hesitate to pronounce judgment, but he could not even make up his mind to order an official inquiry. As a catholic bishop, penetrated with the eternal dignity of the church, he feared to compromised it by engaging prematurely to examine facts of

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which he himself had no sufficient personal knowledge, and which after all, might have no better foundation than the dream of a little peasant and the illusions of poor fanatical souls.

But at last everything seemed to indicate that the moment for interference had come ; when the religious authority should set about examining and giving sentence.

Men of distinction in the catholic world, such as Mgr. de Solines, Archbishop of Arch, the Bishops of Montpellier and of Soissons. Men of great national reputation such as Mr. Veillot, — Rengnier, lately created Cardinal, Vène, Chief Engineer of Mines, and a great number of eminent catholics were at that time in the country. All had examined these extraordinary facts which form the subject of our history, all had interrogated Bernadette : all were believers or strongly incline to believe.

They tell of one of the most venerated bishop that he was unable to control the emotion awakened by the *naïf* statement of the little seer. Gazing upon the open brow which had received the glance of the ineffable Virgin Mother of God, the prelate could not restrain the first movement of piety.

The entire course of events, the testimony of such grave men and their evident conviction after examining, were facts which made a lively impression on the clear and sagacious mind of the Bishop of Tarbes. Mgr. Laurence thought

that the time had now come to speake, and he came forth from his silence On February 28th, he published a pastoral letter which was known immediately throughout the entire diocèse and produced intense excitement; for every one understood that the strange position which he had hitherto assumed was now about to have a solution.

The order of His Lordship the Bishop of Tarbes, constituting a commission to report on the authenticity and nature of certain facts which have, for six months, been taking place on occasion of a real or pretended apparition of the Blessed Virgin, in a grotto situated west of the town of Lourdes.

Ten days after the appointment of the said commission, a formidable attack was made by the irreligious press of Paris, of the provinces, and other countries, upon the events of Lourdes and the Bishop's ordinance. The *Univers*, the *Union*, and the greater part of the Catholic papers bravely met their universal attack. Powerful talents lent themselves to the service of the yet more powerful truth.

In France and abroad public opinion had soon passed judgment, not indeed on the reality of the supernatural events, but on the violent oppression to which all liberty of belief and right of examination were being subjected to in a corner of the empire. Deputations called on the Emperor who immediately sent a brief dis-

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patch to the Prefect of Tarbes, ordering him to rescind the decree closing the Grotto of Lourdes and leave the people free. There was in that day great rejoicing at Lourdes, all the afternoon crowds were going and coming on the road to the grotto.

Before the Massabielle rocks immense numbers of the faithful were kneeling. Canticles and litanies were sung: "Virgo potens, ora pro nobis."

The people drank of the fountain. Faith was free. God had triumphed. During several months, the episcopal commission visited the houses of those whom public notariety designated as object of the miraculous cure subjected to its examination. It established the truth of many miracles. Nevertheless on account of that spirit of extreme prudence which we before remarked, Mgr. Laurence before giving the solemn episcopal verdict in this matter, demanded a still further guaranty of these miraculous cures, the proof of time. He allowed three years to pass. A second examination was then made. The miraculous cures still held good. No one appeared to retract former testimony or to contest any of the facts. After this overwhelming series of proofs and certainty, Mgr. Laurence at length pronounced the judgment which all had been waiting.

"...Having invoked the light of the Holy Ghost and the assistance of the Blessed Virgin.

We have declare.

"That the Immaculate Mary, the Mother of God, really did appear to Bernadette.

"That this apparitions and these cure have every guarantee of truth and that the faithful have solid reason for believing it to be certain.

"Bertrand, Bishop of Tarbes."

"In the name of the Church, Mgr. Laurence purchase from the town of Lourdes the Grotto and surrounding lands.

The Minister of Worship, Mr. Rauland authorized the erection of a church in perpetual memory of the apparition of the Blessed Virgin to Bernadette, in memory of the fountain and the numberless miracles which had attested the heavenly visions.

While the vast temple dedicated to the Immaculate Conception was slowly rising stone, upon stone, Our lady of Lourdes continued to shower blessings and grace upon her clients. At Paris and Bordeaux, in Brittany, Anjou, amid solitary and rural scenes and in the heart of popular cities, Our Lady of Lourdes was invoked and answered with unquestionable signes of her power and goodness.

Before closing our recital, let us narrate some more of these miraculous cures which happened.

XXI

SUDDEN CURE OF A PROTESTANT FREE-THINKER.

I will first relate a charming little miracle, impressed with a certain originality, and which was related to me by one of the pious missionaries of Lourdes, who was an eye-witness of it. It was performed on a Protestant free-thinker, who was so far from thinking of asking for it that he was not only amazed but vexed at it.

He was an artist, Mr. Max M——, who was tolerably well known in one of the principal watering places of the Pyrenees. He there directed with real talent, the orchestra of a grand casino-concert, during the summer season. He had been much troubled for some time on account of a tumor which grew on his right hand and for which neither medicine nor surgery could do anything. In 1866, this tumor, vainly compressed by a leaden plate, was almost as large as an egg; it already prevented the poor musician from closing his hand and from freely using his bow.

His wife was a Catholic; what kind of one, I do not know; but at all events, she was neither a Protestant nor a free-thinker. A pious friend having induced this lady to accompany her to the grotto of Lourdes, Mr. Max M—— consented to be one of the party, which he,

beyond doubt, considered as a curious excursion and not a pilgrimage.

When they reached the grotto, he had not even the good taste to uncover his head nor to throw away his cigar. Standing, with his hat on, smoking among a crowd of pilgrims piously kneeling, he coolly and disdainfully observed the grotto.

His wife's friend approached him : " Mr. Max," said she to him, " the Blessed Virgin may cure you. Come with me and drink the miraculous water." At first the musician resisted and shrugged his shoulders ; but the pious lady insisted. " What harm will it do you ? " said she. " Do it for me. Drink some of the water ; it is fresh and excellent."

" At least," thought the free-thinker, " if it does me no good, it can do me no harm ; " and he approached the fountain sneering a little. The lady offered him a glass of water which he drank at one draught. The tumor had disappeared. " Ah, my God ! " cried he, growing pale and quickly approaching his wife, who was kneeling in prayer. " My dear," said he, much agitated, " I am cured." " Let me alone ! " answered she, a little crossly. " It is not right for you always to mock thus at my convictions." " But I am not mocking. Wait ; look : my tumor is no longer there."

The poor woman could not believe her eyes. The leaden plate lay on his hand, of which

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the skin, the veins and the flesh had suddedly returned to their normal state. With her friend, she threw herself on her knees, bathed in tears.

As for him, as pale as death, he knew not what to do. He had instinctively uncovered his head, thrown away his cigar and could not help saying, and repeating aloud: "I am cured for good. The Virgin has cured me." The missionary Father, who was there, asked him to leave as *ex voto*, the plate of lead with the bandages which had compressed the tumor, to be hung in the grotto. He consented; and to this day, that modest *ex voto* is to be seen at the grotto.

Mr. Max M——went away cured, but not converted. Let us hope that he will some day draw the logical consequences from his cure so evidently miraculous, and that the Immaculate Virgin of Lourdes will sooner or later relieve him of the enormous tumor of heresy which has hetherto prevented his eyes from being opened to the heavenly light of the Gospel and of the Church.

Miracles do not always make conversions: witness those that Our Lord performed before the Scribes and Pharisees—but when they do not convert, they condemn beyond forgiveness. It may be said of miracles what is said of the Eucharist: "*Vita bonis, mors malis.*" To the good, it is life; to the wicked, death. To believe, even after a miracle, one must be sincere and humble.

XXII.

LITTLE PIERRE ESTOURNET'S EYES.

In 1864 Madame Estournet, of Tarbes, had a little boy named Pierre, whom she was nursing and whose eyes began to grow sore. Thinking that it was only one of those temporary ailments to which all young children are subject, she was not at all anxious. One day, when she was carrying the child in her arms, a physician, who was a friend of the family, stopped to see little Pierre. "His eyes are a little sore," said she.

"Oh! he is a splendid child! But what is this soreness of the eyes?" said the doctor, in an anxious way, as he examined the pupils of the eye. "You unfortunate woman; this child is getting blind."

The poor mother was terrified. "You are not serious in telling me that? Is it true?" For answer, the physician showed her Pierre's eyes. The inside was hideous: a ball of red flesh, swimming in a sort of matter. Madame Estournet was heartbroken. A feeling of strong faith came to sustain her. She thought of the water of the grotto.

She however took her son to another doctor. "The case is serious, very serious," said the latter; "you have much reason to fear that the child may become blind; it may be too late. Why did you wait so long?"

"Oh! my God! I did not suspect this!" said the poor weeping mother.

A prescription was written. Every day there was to be put on the eye a drop of very powerful liquid, which would consume the diseased flesh.

Madame Estournet, was endowed with a rare decision of character and a very lively faith. She at once resolved what to do. She turned towards the Blessed Virgin and said to her: "No remedies! You, O Mary, will cure my child by the water from the grotto." And she threw the doctor's prescription into the fire.

She again examined the poor child's eyes; they seemed worse than she had yet seen them. Beside herself, she fell on her knees before a statue of the Virgin, and said, many times aloud: "Cure him for me! Oh! cure him for me!"

Then trembling she pours on little Pierre's eyes some drops of the miraculous water. The eye-lid scarcely moves. A sort of despair seizes upon the mother. "Oh! it is not possible, said she; no, no, he will not be cured; I do not deserve a miracle."

A little while after, unable to restrain her impatience, she takes her child from the cradle, and washes his eyes again with the water from the grotto; then takes him in her arms to see if he will look. Her father-in-law and a woman of the house were there. She calls Pierre and caresses him to make him look at her. The

child feebly uncloses, and, with his eyes scarcely opened, he turns his head towards where she was calling him. "Oh! he will be blind." said the mother, in a tone of distress.

"No! no, see, Madame," said the neighbor, "he is looking at you." The agitated mother could not perceive it. But her confidence in Mary overcame her fears; she began to hope again.

Three days passed in anguish and in prayer. "O Our Lady of Lourdes! O Virgin of the grotto, cure my child!" These words were unceasingly on her lips and in her heart; she repeats them thousands of times.

Every day she pours some drops of the water from the grotto on the child's eyes, without using any remedy. On the third day, she has just wiped the little one's eyelids and was looking anxiously at them, when the child opened his eyes, fixed them gently on his mother, smiled, looked again; his eyes were clear and bright.

"I became crazed with joy," said she to the missionary to whom she related the fact. "I fell on my knees before the Virgin. Then, what did I do? I do not very well know. What I do know is, that I threw myself on the Virgin's neck, and covered her with kisses. Ah! she restored my child to me!"

The doctor came. Madame Estournet showed him her little Pierre, saying: "I am content; I think he is cured. But examine them well, and see how they seem to you?"

"He is cured," said the doctor, after a moment of attentive observation; "the remedy was happily applied, was it not?"

"But tell me, is he really cured? do you assure me of it?"

"Yes."

"Well then, doctor, it was not your prescription that cured him. I must confess that I put it in the fire."

"Miserable woman!"

"when you were writing it, I already thought: 'I will not use it; I have a better remedy.' Do you know, doctor, what has cured my little Pierre? the water from the grotto, and it alone."

The doctor's answer was not related to me.

To-day, in 1871, little Pierre Estournet is seven or eight years old, is full of life and has magnificent eyes.

XXII.

MARVELOUS CURE OF A YOUTH OF FIFTEEN WHO WAS DUMB AND PARALYZED.

On Saturday, the 18th of July, 1868, about six o'clock in the evening, a touching spectacle excited public sympathy at Lourdes. Two strangers were carrying a chair through the streets, each holding it with one hand. On the chair a boy of fifteen was seated, resting his arms round the neck of the bearers. One of

these men was his father. The boy could scarcely sit up, his head shook, his paralyzed limbs swung helplessly as he was carried along. Where were they going? Every one at Lourdes guessed. "They are going to the grotto," people said. Poor child! poor father.

They were going to that grotto where despairing misery is wont to hasten; whither the Blessed Virgin attracts, because she loves to manifest there the power of her mercy.

This boy, Jean Pucheon, was originally from Gouze, in Lagor, district of Orthez, (Basse Pyrenees). He had always been of a quiet, gentle, amiable disposition. For nearly two years past his health had been failing. He had felt a strange and unconquerable aversion to his ordinary food.

He grew visibly thinner, and his weakness became extreme.

On Easter Sunday, the 12th of April, 1868, before Vespers, Jean, who was standing at the time, fell down in a faint. His mother took him in her arms and laid him on the bed. From that time the poor boy was little more than a corpse. His withered limbs refused to carry him; his head shook without his having any power to control it; his arms alone retained their power; according to his father's expression, all his limbs were "disjointed." He had to be carried as when he was in the cradle. In this sad state he became a heavy burden to

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his parents, whose only means of support was their daily toil. Either his father or mother had to keep continual watch over him. He could not stay in bed all day, and he was placed on a little straw chair, but it was impossible for him to hold himself up. He was bent double, and some one had to sit beside him to support him.

One day the sick boy's face assumed a strange expression. His mouth opened; he seemed as if trying to speak; there came from his throat only a hard husky breath. His tongue was suddenly gathered up in his mouth. Poor child! already paralyzed, he became dumb.

His parents were heart-broken. He was their eldest son; he had always been most kind and affectionate. These worthy people had neither land, nor house, nor trade; the father was simply a farm laborer; his wife had never learned anything but house-work. The younger boy, now of an age to support himself and assist the family, was soon to be hired out as a servant. The future looked very gloomy. However, he had not lost his reason. Jean could communicate with his parents by signs and by deep breaths, by which he attracted their attention. But his dumbness afflicted his parents very much, made the care of him still more difficult, and rendered heavier a charge already so burdensome. The sick boy often suffered from acute pains in his stomach. When they became very great, he felt them go up through his body even

to his head. The pain in his head made him forget everything else. It was then pitiful to see him. His loud and painful breathing, the only complaint possible for him to make, grieved the hearts of his parents. Not knowing what to do to relieve his pain, he struck his forehead with his clenched fists. If the attack lasted long he would put his hand on his breast with signs of distress, and point toward his bed. They would immediately take him and lay him on it. He would remain motionless, with closed eyes, breathing huskily, his mouth half open, for ten or twelve minutes; then, coming to himself, he would point to the armchair, where they would place him once more. This happened once or twice every day.

From the manner of the physician who visited him, the parents were persuaded that he knew nothing about this strange and terrible disease, and that he had not the slightest hope of saving the boy. The mother had prepared the shroud for his burial which every one thought was near. This species of agony lasted for more than two months.

Towards the end of June the boy often called them by his loud breathing and began to make very animated gestures which puzzled his parents. He made a sign for something far off, which they could not guess then; he made movements with his arms as if sprinkling water, showed the action of drinking, joined his hands

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as if praying fervently, and, with extraordinary vivacity, he pointed to his legs, imitating the movement of walking, then moved his lips as if in speaking. During this pantomime, he showed an inexplicable joy. His parents, who interpreted his wants and his thoughts every day, were bewildered by these impotent manifestation of ideas unknown to them. When, after having attentively followed his movements, they said to him: "I do not understand," the boy was grieved and seemed completely discouraged. The father and mother often asked themselves what it could be that the dear child wanted.

One day, after a renewal of this painful scene one of them suddenly thought of saying to him: "Perhaps you want to go to Our Lady of Lourdes." An intense joy brightened the boy's face. He had at last succeeded in making himself understood. He nodded his head several times, smiled, and gave vent to his joy by breathing loud and hard. "What do you want to do at Lourdes?" He answered by signs: "Wash myself, drink and pray." "Why?" His gestures replied: "I will be able to walk, and to speak If I do not go I shall not be cured." It must be observed that the name of Our Lady of Lourdes was well known in these religious countries, and that before the child's sickness he had heard of the cures performed by the water from the grotto.

Ever since he had been understood, poor Jean

repeated his wish to make a pilgrimage, every day and several times a day. The thought occurred to them to ask him this question : " Who told you to go to Lourdes to be cured ? " The boy without hesitation pointed to heaven. " Was it the Blessed Virgin who told you ? " He made a sign of assent. Since his illness no one had spoken to him of Our Lady of Lourdes. It was an entirely supernatural inspiration ; the more remarkable that the boy had but moderate intelligence.

They promised to take him to Lourdes, without any very fixed intention of doing so. Faith had not yet come into the souls of his parents. But the boy insisted more and more every day ; his looks of entreaty became more touching, and sometime his gestures were eager and even impatient. His father then reflected on a hope which he considered childish. He said to himself ; The child has always been good ; he has kept himself innocent ; the Blessed Virgin will hear him. And the journey to Lourdes was decided upon in his heart. He mentioned the day to his son, who testified the greatest joy, and confidence in his cure, and after that very moment said by signs : " We will go and I shall be cured ! "

But when the appointed day arrived, the father said it was impossible to go. The poor boy, vexed and disappointed, fell off his chair. He was thus disappointed several times, and the same accident always occurred.

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At length the journey was fixed for Saturday, July 18, and a carriage was hired. Jean could not contain himself for joy on learning that his pilgrimage was certain. He could not sleep all Friday night. Several times he woke his father by his loud breathing, and he could hardly be kept in bed till morning. When he was settled on his little chair in the carriage, his joy was excessive.

The carriage was approaching Lourdes, when, not a voice, but an articulate breath said: "Papa! Papa!" The father looked at Jean. "Papa," repeated the child, "I am going to be cured!" And he put his tongue out between his lips. The father trembled and felt himself filled with hope. He thanked God for this first favor. The child had no more power of motion than the evening before; his throat gave no sound, but his breathing was articulate; he moved his tongue, and he appeared delighted. From that moment he prayed, pronouncing his words, and clasping his hands fervently. From time to time he interrupted himself to say, always in the same manner: "Papa, I am going to be cured! The Blessed Virgin is going to cure me! I shall walk; I shall talk." Each word increased the father's confidence. At length they arrived at Lourdes. The poor little cripple was carried in his chair by his father and driver. Many persons saw

the sorrowful sight. The chair once placed before the grotto, the two men knelt down, and all three prayed fervently. The child murmured *Our Father and Hail Mary*. The poor father's heart cried out to the merciful Virgin. The boy was carried on his chair into one of the little rooms belonging to the miraculous fountain. The two men undressed him, and his father took him in his arms, more helpless than a new born child, infirm and bending every way. He plunged him into the water, and held him sitting up. The child prayed, the father prayed full of anxiety and of hope. Whilst he prayed, he poured water on Jean's head. A few minutes after, a word came forth clear and distinct: "Papa !....." At this voice, which he had not heard for two months, the poor father was overpowered with joy. At first he could only utter a stifled cry: "O my God!" "Papa," said the voice, "you can take me out: I am cured."

The child had felt life returning to his limbs; they became firm; he tried them on the bottom of the basin; the rest of his body at the same time grew strong; he spoke unconsciously, by instinct. He arose, carried up by the water; he stood on his feet. Two great tears fell from the father's eyes into that water which had entirely restored his son. Jean sat on the edge of the basin.

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prevented me from seeing my son." He took him by the hand, and the child for the first time in three months was there before him standing by himself, speaking and smiling. The boy dressed and put on his shoes himself. The driver, who had gone out a short time before, now came in: "My God!" cried he; "oh, this is a miracle!"

They all went to kneel before the holy grotto; and soon the boy, without any assistance, climbed the rock, and reached the house of the Missionaries.

When the Missionary who collected these touching details said to the father: "You are very fortunate," the latter could only answer by an inarticulate sound; his speech and his sight were for a moment lost in tears. Emotion choked his voice at every instant as he related the illness and cure of his son. He could not express his gratitude towards Her who had saved him from mourning and misery.

The child seemed as if just awakened from a troubled sleep. He returned to the village on foot without any help. The motion of his legs, which were extremely thin, was slow and unsteady. Next day, at half-past five o'clock, he again made the journey from the town to the grotto. He went to Confession and Communion. He was happy and smiling.

Seeing a workman bring to the Missionary a handsome donation for the building of the

chapel, Jean's father looked with holy envy at the pieces of gold which glittered on the table: "Ah," said he, "they are happy who can give! I would also like to give something to the Blessed Virgin.....but I, a poor laborer, have nothing."

As on the evening before, Jean returned to Lourdes without any assistance. The pilgrims got into their carriage, and, at eleven o'clock at night, they arrived at the door of their house. At the sound of the carriage, the mother, who was waiting impatiently, lit a candle and came to receive the travelers. Jean got out with but little help. The mother on coming out found him before her. At sight of her child standing erect she stopped. "Mamma, I am cured!" said Jean. The poor woman was ready to faint. This dangerous emotion passed; she looked silently at her son; she could not believe her eyes. It was indeed he, but coming from the arms of his other mother, the Blessed Virgin.

At the noise of the carriage, and the voice of the mother, whose first words were exclamations of joy, several neighbors got up and came to share in their gladness. Neither could they believe that the boy who was walking, speaking, laughing before them, was the same who had started a few evenings before paralyzed and dumb, doomed to certain death. In a few days the whole neighborhood knew of the cure of the boy from Gouzer, and blessed Our Lady of Lourdes.

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About two months after, Jean returned to the grotto. He had already made long journeys, and had begun to work a little. His gayety, his good health, his happiness delighted his father.

Jean loves the Blessed Virgin very much, and likes to pray to her. He sometimes leaves his meals and disappears. His father seeks him, and is edified to find him in a corner, kneeling in prayer. The gentle and powerful hand which cured the body had left its imprint on that innocent soul.

Let us not be astonished at seeing these miraculous favors granted almost exclusively to the humble of this world, to children, and to the poor: it is the equitable order of a kind Providence. The rich have doctors and apothecaries; they can go to Canterets, Bareges, Leuchon, Eaux-Bonnes, and to all the watering places; the poor and the humble have only the good God and the Blessed Virgin and miracles. As for mothers and young virgins, it is easily conceived why the Blessed Virgin loves to treat them as privileged ones, even when they are rich.

REMARKABLE CURE OF A PRIEST AT THE SANCTUARY OF LOURDES, ON AUGUST 15, 1878.

The abbé de Musy, priest of the diocese of Autun, and of a distinguished family, had been

ill for twenty years. During the last eleven years he had only been able to celebrate mass twice, and that with much difficulty. He has just been miraculously cured at the sanctuary of Lourdes. The following is an account given by a young priest who was a fortunate witness of the miracle: We started from Couches-les-Mines on the evening of the 6th of August. At this period the weakness of M. de Musy was such that he could not walk a step; at the station we had to employ two men to carry him from the waiting room to the carriage. We arrived at Lourdes on Friday evening, the 8th of August. An apartment had been taken for us on the first floor, and thither we carried our invalid. The next day we went to the crypt; and a wheeled chair enable the Abbé de Musy to approach the holy table, and he had that happiness every day. When the crowd was too great, the priest quitted the altar and administered holy communion to the invalid in his place. After Mass, he descended to the grotto in a carriage, and then he was wheeled in his chair to the *piscine*, or bath. During six days he bathed in the miraculous water, and for six days numerous pilgrims saw him praying at the same hour before the grotto, consoling his suffering companions. More than one shed tears on seeing one so young, and all were soon united to him by sympathy as they already were by prayer. Two days after our arrival

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the Abbé Peyramale, the venerable Curé of Lourdes, came to see our dear invalid; his words, full of faith, seemed to us a pledge of an approaching cure. "If," said he, "the Blessed Virgin will only come to our assistance, you will soon be cured." From that moment the Abbé de Musy had found a powerful friend and advocate with Mary. On Wednesday, the 18th of August, we had a second visit from the Curé. On coming in he exclaimed: "Has not the Blessed Virgin yet cured you?" Again he promised his prayers and left us full of hope. Thursday, the 14th inst., the Baronne de la Rue, wife of the sub-prefect of Saint-Malo, after having gone through great sufferings for twelve years, which terminated in paralysis was suddenly cured on touching for the first time the soil of the grotto! Mary did not even give her time to plunge into the *piscine* (bath.) One heard it whispered through the crowd, "Now it is the Abbé's turn." All looked for the event with such faith and certainty that the brother guarding reserved a candle for this intention for the morrow. The Baroness just restored to health prayed for the invalid; he himself said to me in the evening: "I think that I shall be cured." It may easily be understood that the night of the 14th was one of anxiety and sleeplessness. Early in the morning on the blessed day of the Assumption we arrived at the crypt, where only invalids are

admitted on fast-days to hear holy Mass; the Abbé de Musy requested that I might be allowed to say my Mass at the altar of the Blessed Virgin. We scarcely hoped to obtain this favor; however it was granted to us. On returning to the sacristy I saw the Abbé Sire, a devoted servant of Mary Immaculate; I offered to serve his Mass. I must not omit to say that the intention of M. Sire was, on that day, in offering the holy sacrifice, to place the merit of it at the disposal of the Blessed Virgin, in order that she might apply it as seemed most advantageous and for her greater glory. It was the second Mass that the Abbé de Musy had heard after having received holy communion; I felt very much agitated. At the elevation, I perceived, to my great astonishment, that the invalid was kneeling; instinctively I looked at my watch, it seemed to me that the miracle was beginning: it was eight o'clock. A quarter of an hour elapsed, and the Abbé de Musy was still kneeling. Occasionally I turned round, fearing to see him fall from fatigue. After the Mass, I approached him; I could not believe my eyes; the few people present seemed to enter into my feelings. At nine o'clock I hesitate, and bring forward the wheeled-chair, the Abbé de Musy rises, unassisted, with ease, again kneels, and then again rises to speak to a paralyzed lady: "Madame, the Blessed Virgin has heard my prayer! she has cured me. Have confidence,

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I shall pray for you." He then took his departure and I followed him, carrying the chair under my arm. As soon as we had left the crypt I asked him if he were cured. "I believe so," these few words alone were uttered. Who could express the feelings with which they were uttered and listened to? The coachman, who was no longer wanted, went away full of astonishment. We then descended on foot to the miraculous source, taking the longest way; at first it was impossible for us to speak: then we recited some Hail Marys till we got to the grotto. The brother guardian, in tears, brought us the candle which his presentiment made him keep for the occasion; he opened the gate, and shut it after us; it was necessary to be protected from the crowd; the people recognized the priest who for six days they had seen incapable of walking a single step! They exclaimed, "A miracle! a miracle!" and burst forth with the *Magnificat*. The crowd is immense, and increases every instant. After ten Hail Marys recited for sinners, a great number of pictures are presented to the Abbé de Musy, who signs his name on them without any effort—he, who for so many years could not make use of his eyes! All wish to see him walk: he walks, and all are able to see him, owing to his height. He blesses the crowd; all want to know who he is. He relates his cure in a few words: "I am a priest of the diocese of Autun. For twenty

years I have been ill ; for the past eleven years I have been unable to say mass. For the last few months I have been unable to walk ! I came to Lourdes to ask for my cure ; the Blessed Virgin has granted it to me ; help me to thank her." Then picture and books are again brought to him to sign ; at half-past eleven the Missionary Fathers have the gate opened ; the crowd, rushes in, everybody wants to approach one who has been the object of such a great grace : they want to touch his garments, to kiss his hands ; they fall on their knees asking for the blessing and prayers ; all weep. M. de Musy has great difficulty to pass through the excited crowd. They follow him to the house of the Fathers. Again they want to see him walk. After a few minutes' rest he ascends to the chapel, easily mounting the rapid wooden staircase which conducts thither. About two o'clock he returns to his room. At Vespers, in the evening, M. Peyramale related to his parishioners this cure, and proclaimed it as one of the gratest and most striking of the miracles which had been seen at Lourdes. After Vespers, the Abbé de Musy paid his first visit, and went to thank the Curé. I cannot describe to you the inexpressible joy of this holy priest at seeing his dear invalid so perfectly cured. The next day, Saturday, in spite of many interruptions and continued visits, we had to prepare for the ceremonies of the Mass, which had been partly forgotten after

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eleven years interruption. In the afternoon, a stranger was announced, he entered, and approaching M. de Musy, said: "I come to thank you; your miracle has converted me. For forty years I have not frequented the sacraments. On coming to Lourdes, I promised my sister to be converted if I could only see one miracle; I was before the railing when you related yours, the recital of which convinced me; I have been to confession, and I beg the favor of partaking of holy communion at your Mass." The Abbé de Musy only answered him by an embrace, assuring him that this miracle gave him as much joy as his own. The next morning M. de Peyramale came to fetch M. de Musy, as he wished to assist at his first Mass; it was said at the altar where the miracle took place; the crypt was overflowing with the faithful, who all wished to receive holy communion from the hand of the miraculously cured Priest. The first person who had that happiness was the convert of the 15th, and the second the lady who was cured on the 14th. After these wonderful days of excitement, the Abbé de Musy returned to his family. He has said Mass every morning; he walks without fatigue; he can write or read for many hours. The cure is perfect and complete.

(Signed,)

THE ABBÉ ANTOINE,
Priest of the Diocese of Autun.

PRAYER.

Thou revealest thyself again to thy servants, O Mary ; thou showest thyself to us in all the holiness, thou hadst from the first, and thou biddest us invoke thee under the title of the Immaculate Conception. Oh, what joy it effords us to honour thee in the most glorious of thy privileges ! Yes, O queen of heaven, thou art truly spotless, and the sun in all his splendour is but darkness compared to thee. Be thou blessed on earth as thou art in heaven for ever. Poor wayfarers on earth we shall one day quench our thirst at the never-failing fountain of thy love. There thou awaitest us ; there we shall recruit our exausted strength ; there too we shall be privileged to receive thy sweet words and maternal smiles.

It is under the name of Our Lady of Lourdes that we here invoke thee, O generous Help of Christians. Oh, what feelings of delight this sweet name awakens in my breast ! Yes I fondly hope that thou wilt enlighten the path I tread, I hope that thy maternal smiles will cheer me on the way, I hope that thou wilt obtain for me pardon for the past, a holy life now, and perseverance for the time to come. I hope that thou will ever be my joy, my support, my consolation and my strength. Look upon me here prostrate before thee, in the name

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of my whole family. I pray thee also for the deliverance of our Holy Father the Pope from his bondage, and for the triumph of good over evil. Lady of Lourdes establish thy reign in every heart, spread abroad that light which dazzled the first witnesses of the apparition; that guided by thee, sweet Mother, all may at last reach in safety their everlasting home. Amen.

Mary Immaculate, pray for us.



of my whole family. I pray thee also for the
continuance of our Holy Father the Pope from
the bondage, and for the triumph of good over
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Many immaculate pray for us

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